

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
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-----081039 060634Z /11

R 051039Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8726
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 05351

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINS, IR
SUBJ: PENDING GOVERNMENT CHANGES

REF: TEHRAN 5045

1. RUMORS WE HAVE BEEN HEARING FOR SOME TIME OF POSSIBLE
CHANGES IN AMOUZEGAR CABINET APPEAR VERY CLOSE TO FRUITION.
TO THEM ARE LIKELY TO BE ADDED SOME HIGH LEVEL CHANGES IN
SECURITY AND POLICE DIRECTORS.

2. A NUMBER OF REPORTS REACHING THE EMBASSY FROM DIFFERENT
SOURCES SUGGEST STRONGLY THAT, ONCE TODAY'S (JUNE 5) TEST
OF STRENGTH WITH THE OPPOSITION HAS PASSED, SHAH WILL
ANNOUNCE A NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT CHANGES. MOST PERSISTENT
RUMOR IS THAT UP TO FOUR OF FOLLOWING FIVE MINISTERS SLATED
FOR REPLACEMENT: MINISTER OF COMMERCE KHOSROWSHAHI, MINISTER
OF HEALTH AND WELFARE SHEIKHOESLAMZADEH, MINISTER OF EDUCA-
TION GANJI, MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND TOURISM HOMAYOUN
AND MINISTER OF INTERIOR NASR-ESFANANI. ALSO PROBABLY ARE
CHANGES IN HEAD OR SAVAK, HEAD OF POLICE, AND POSSIBLY EVEN
HEAD OF GENDARMERIE. (WE HAVE BEEN HEARING REPORTS SAVAK GENERAL
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NASSERI HAS ALREADY RESIGNED).

3. WE WOULD ESTIMATE THIS TO BE PART OF SHAH'S CURRENT DRIVE
TO SEPARATE MAJORITY OF RELIGIOUS OPPOSITION FROM KHOMEINI-LED
RELIGIOUS EXTREMISTS WHO HAVE CLOSE WORKING RELATIONS WITH
NATIONAL FRONT AND OTHER OPPOSITION ELEMENTS. WHILE SOME OF
THESE CHANGES (IN THE CABINET) HAVE BEEN IN THE WORKS FOR SOME

TIME AND FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, CHANGES IN SECURITY DIRECTORS WOULD BE INTENDED TO CONVEY READINESS TO BE MORE CONCILIATORY TOWARD RELIGIOUS OPPOSITION.

4. ONCE SUCH CHANGES ANNOUNCED, HOWEVER, PEOPLE WILL BE LOOKING TO SEE WHAT NEW INSTRUCTIONS ARE ISSUED TO SECURITY SERVICES SO AS TO DETERMINE WHETHER CHANGES ARE DUE TO A TRUE DESIRE TO CONCILIATE OR SIMPLY REFLECT EFFORT TO JACK UP THE ESTABLISHMENT AND OBTAIN GREATER EFFICIENCY IN LAW ENFORCEMENT AS IN OTHER SECTORS OF GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY.

5. ABOVE CHANGES COULD HAVE SOME BEARING ON CHANGING LEADERSHIP IN RASTAKHIZ PARTY, AS EVIDENCED BY RESIGNATIONS OF WING HEADS ANSARY AND MAJIDI TO DATE. RUMORS OF POSSIBLE THIRD WING PERSIST, AS DOES RUMOR THAT ZAHEDI MIGHT ASSUME A ROLE IN THE PARTY IN ADDITION TO MFA. THUS PARTY ROLE COULD BE PLAYED UP AS PART OF SHAH'S DESIRE FOR GREATER POLITICAL PARTICIPATION.
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